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ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF BORDERLESS ALLIANCE

Contract No.: AID-624-C-13-00002-00

September 2016

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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

BA	Borderless Alliance
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
ISD™	Impact Strengthening Development™
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A team of consultants to the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (the Hub) carried out an organizational capacity assessment of Borderless Alliance (BA) in July 2016. The purpose of the assessment was to measure the impact of the Hub's capacity building efforts to date and to help develop a capacity building plan for the coming years. The consultants used the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, as well as a tool established by Kanava International (see Annex A).

The assessment shows that BA's overall score increased by 41 percent, with substantial progress in Service Delivery (83 percent), Human Resources Management (48 percent), and Administration (45 percent). The scores also reveal that limited progress has been made in strengthening Financial Management. Table 1 below compares the scores obtained through this assessment to baseline scores gathered by the Hub in May 2014.

Table 1: Borderless Alliance Organizational Capacity Scores, 2014 and 2016

OCA Category	Score on a 6-Point Scale		% Change
	May 2014	July 2016	
1. Governance	4	5.4	35
2. Administration	4	5.8	45
3. Human Resources Management	3	4.4	48
4. Financial Management	4	5.0	25
5. Service Delivery	3	5.5	83
6. External Relations	4	5.3	33
7. Sustainability	3	4.0	33
TOTAL	3.6	5.1	41%

The OCA scores were used to develop a capacity building plan, shown in section 3.2. Most of the tasks can be completed by the organization itself, but others will require support from USAID or other donors. Annex B contains the consultants' recommendations for areas where the Hub could provide support. In its new work plan, the Hub has selected from among these recommendations and agreed to support BA in specific areas. The table below lays out those areas and summarizes BA's role in completing these tasks.

Table 2: Planned Hub Support of Borderless Alliance Capacity Building

Strategic Priority	Hub Actions	BA Actions
Promote financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a research on best practice and lessons learned from similar alliances abroad in regards to sustainability and formulate a plan for BA. Organize workshop to 1) share best practices on sustainability, 2) define and develop member benefits, and 3) discuss diversification of funding. 	Participate in workshop on sustainability.
Strengthen project performance management	Develop robust project management system and system to track donor requirements; train staff.	Collaborate with Hub to develop project management and donor requirement tracking systems and ensure key staff attend training.

Strategic Priority	Hub Actions	BA Actions
Strengthen project performance management	Help develop procurement policy/manual and train staff.	Collaborate with Hub to develop procurement policy/ manual and ensure key staff attend training.

I. MANDATE AND ORGANIZATION OF BORDERLESS ALLIANCE

I.1 BRIEF HISTORY AND MANDATE OF ORGANIZATION

Borderless Alliance officially launched in May 2012 with support from the USAID West Africa Trade Hub and its partners, provides an independent, sub-regional platform for leading producers, traders, transporters and financiers to propose and advocate for systemic and practical improvements to the movement of goods, transport, capital and services across West Africa. Guided by international best practices, sound research and their Code of Ethics, BA members work together to promote change through dialogue and action.

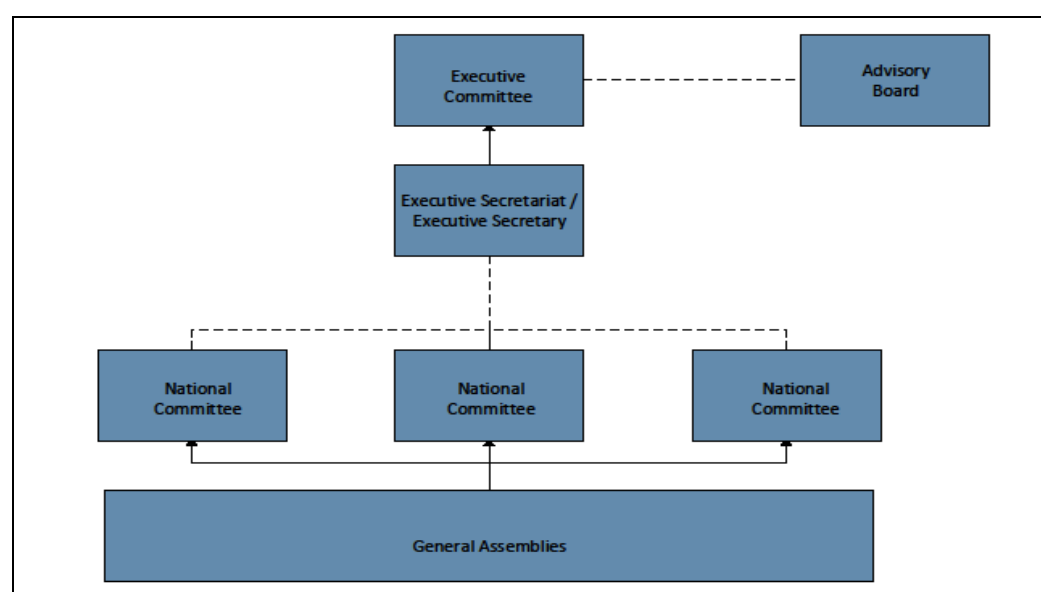
BA's Vision: We envision a West Africa where a truck can move goods across the region quickly, efficiently and cheaply, whether from Abidjan to Lagos or from Cotonou to Timbuktu. More efficient transport means more trade – and in turn, this means stronger economic growth, higher profits for companies, greater income for national governments, increased investment and more jobs.

BA's Mission: We aim to increase trade across the region, by working towards the elimination of all non-tariff barriers to trade.

BA's Approach: We bring together stakeholders from the private sector to leverage resources and address critical issues affecting transport and trade in West Africa. We create platforms for direct dialogue between private and public sector stakeholders, while working with partners to ensure that credible data on the true state of intra-regional trade is regularly collected and disseminated.

I.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Figure 1: Borderless Alliance Organizational Structure



2. SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

Borderless Alliance has strong systems in place, a committed Executive Secretariat, and an important mission that will assist to increase trade flows in West Africa.

The organization has improved in all OCA areas, as shown in Table 3 below, with the greatest improvement in Service Delivery, and the smallest improvement in Financial Management. Overall, Borderless Alliance has improved by 41 percent over its 2014 baseline OCA score.

Table 3: OCA Scores to Date

OCA Category	Score on a 6-Point Scale		% Change
	May 2014	July 2016	
1. Governance	4	5.4	35
2. Administration	4	5.8	45
3. Human Resources Management	3	4.4	48
4. Financial Management	4	5.0	25
5. Service Delivery	3	5.5	83
6. External Relations	4	5.3	33
7. Sustainability	3	4.0	33
TOTAL	3.6	5.1	41%

The percent change may not match exactly, as the 2016 numbers have been rounded here.

2.1 STRENGTHS

BA's strengths lie in the following OCA areas, listed starting with the strongest: Administration, Service Delivery, Governance, External Relations, and Financial Management. BA takes its institutional capacity very seriously and continues to strengthen its organization, which has led to the increase in its OCA scores.

2.2 WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES

BA had already identified its priority areas for development: a procurement policy; a staff performance management system, including a retention program; strengthening of its national committees; and financial sustainability. The weakest areas, as shown in the OCA scores are Sustainability and Human Resources Management.

3. RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING PRIORITIES

Due to resource constraints, not all areas of priority can be addressed at once. As the seven categories are all interlinked to support a stronger organization, implementing all of the recommendations will lead to a stronger organization, but the reality is that activities still must be prioritized. At times one particular aspect or another becomes a priority because a potential donor asks that it be addressed before a project or grant can be awarded.

3.1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the gap analysis and prioritization exercise, we provide a summary of recommendations below. Detailed recommendations are found in Table 4. Section 3.3 contains a list of recommendations for areas the Hub should focus on with Borderless Alliance.

3.1.1 NEAR TERM

In the near term, BA should focus on developing a procurement manual, developing a robust project management system, strengthening the capacity of its National Committees to provide services and support the regional alliance, and continuing to strengthen its ability to become financially sustainable.

3.1.2 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Other priority areas include developing a system to review and update policies, using financial statements to better manage the organization, developing a subcontract management manual, and developing a staff performance management system, including a retention program.

3.2 COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BORDERLESS ALLIANCE ACTIONS

Table 4 lists all of the recommended tasks that BA should undertake to continue building its capacity and strengthening its ability to become financially sustainable. The tasks can be ranked based on the priorities established by BA. Some of the tasks can be done with internal resources, while others will require financial and technical resources from the Hub or other donors or clients. The table includes recommended Hub actions, which are more fully described in section 3.3 below.

Table 4: Recommended Organizational Strengthening Tasks and Actions

Standard	Component	Task	Suggested Action
Administration	Administration	Develop a system to review, update, or revise the organization's policies and procedures on a regular basis	Internal action
Administration	Travel Policies and Procedures	Develop a system to deal with exceptions to policies / procedures	Internal action

Standard	Component	Task	Suggested Action
Administration	Procurement	Develop a procurement policy, train staff on it, and implement	With Hub support
Financial Management	Financial Statements	Print monthly financial reports and provide to management	Internal action
Financial Management	Financial Statements	Develop policy for closing audit findings and recommendations	Internal action
Financial Management	Payments	Ensure segregation of duties as much as possible	Internal action
Program Management	Client Compliance	Develop formal tracking system to ensure compliance with client reporting and approval requirements	With Hub support
Program Management	Sub-grant / Subcontract Management	As they will soon have subcontractors, develop a subcontract management manual	With other donor support
Human Resources Management	Recruitment and Retention	Develop formal retention program, including providing staff development opportunities for career advancement	With other donor support
Human Resources Management	Staffing Levels	Staffing plan should be developed that takes into account the diversity of the community they serve	Internal action
Human Resources Management	Staff Time Management	BA should move to using an online timekeeping program that does not allow a pre-population of the timesheets	Internal action
Human Resources Management	Staff and Consultant Salaries and Benefits Policy	Salary scales should be made available to staff	Internal action
Human Resources Management	Staff Performance Management	Develop a staff performance management policy and system that includes grievance procedures	With other donor support
Human Resources Management	Volunteers/Interns	As office space allows, use interns to augment staff	Internal action
Project Performance Management	Project Management Capacity	Develop a more robust project management system, hire new qualified staff as number of projects increases, train staff	With Hub support
Project Performance Management	Field Oversight	Schedule regular supervisory visits to the field offices	Internal action
Project Performance Management	Supervision	Develop a supervision plan, train supervisors, and document and follow-up on findings	With other donor to assist
Organizational Management	Organizational Operational Plan	Quarterly review of the operational plan will allow for earlier readjustments, as required	Internal action

Standard	Component	Task	Suggested Action
Organizational Management	Change Management	Develop process for involving staff in or implementing or responding to change, monitoring implementation and whether it leads to improvements	Internal action
Organizational Management	Public Communications	Regularly update website and/or Facebook page and communications templates	Internal action
Governance and Ethics	Board Composition and Responsibility	Try to have the board membership reflect community diversity, including gender	Internal action
Governance and Ethics	Succession Planning	Develop a succession plan	Internal action
Leadership and Team Dynamics	Internal Communications	Create or increase opportunities to exchange ideas and discuss issues	Internal action
Leadership and Team Dynamics	Decision-making	Engage staff as much as possible in the decision making process	Internal action
Leadership and Team Dynamics	Work Environment	Start providing opportunities for training and professional development	Internal action
Organizational Sustainability	New Opportunity / Business Development	Develop new business targets and apply resources to try and meet these targets	Internal action
Organizational Sustainability	Diversification of Funding	Assign “business development” responsibilities to a specific unit or specific staff, even if it’s not their full time job	Internal action
Organizational Sustainability	Absorptive Capacity	Need resources to add more staff	Resource issue
Organizational Sustainability	Financial Sustainability	Develop plan to address long-term financial sustainability issues that includes best practices and lessons learned from abroad	With Hub support
Organizational Sustainability	Strengthening National Committees	Develop workshop with national committees to discuss their mandates, roles and responsibilities, services, and how to engage their members to broaden BA reach	With Hub support

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT FROM THE HUB

The full ISD™ assessment includes detailed information on the various areas the team reviewed jointly with Borderless Alliance. This section focuses on the areas of support that we recommend the project provide to BA.

I. Administration: Assist in developing a procurement policy/manual and train staff

As Borderless Alliance matures, it will increasingly need to procure goods and services, sometimes under different requirements as dictated by its clients. To ensure a sound system, the alliance should now establish a procurement policy and manual and staff train staff on procurement management.

Once a solid basic procurement system is in place, BA can tailor it to meet the needs of specific clients. The lack of a procurement policy increases the possibility of clients disallowing procurements, which would have negative financial ramifications for BA.

Since BA has multiple USAID-funded projects and USAID has strict regulations, it makes sense to establish a procurement system based on USAID regulations. Borderless can then either accept the USAID system as its own or tailor it to its own needs, while ensuring that USAID regulations are maintained as requirements for any procurements under a USAID-funded project.

The Hub has staff well-versed in the USAID procurement process who can assist Borderless in developing a procurement policy and manual, and the train the alliance's staff on the policy.

2. Program Management: Develop formal tracking system to ensure client compliance

As the number of BA's clients and projects increases and its staff grows in number, it will become more challenging to remember each client's requirements and deliverable due dates. In preparation for BA's growth, the organization needs a formal tracking system to ensure compliance with donor requirements. While the system will initially focus on donor compliance, it will also serve as a basis for a project management system that Borderless can use to track and monitor both its own requirements and those of its clients. The Trade Hub, through Kanava, should help develop this tracking system based on best practices implementing USAID projects for a number of years. The Hub would work closely with BA staff to develop the system and train staff to use it.

3. Project Performance Management: Develop robust project management system and train staff

As Borderless Alliance becomes a more sophisticated organization and the number and types of its donors and projects increases, it will need a well-documented and complete project management system. This is especially important if BA starts hiring more staff, as a documented system will assist with onboarding new staff and ensure that continuity of projects is maintained as staff travel and during staff turnover. In preparation for BA's growth, the time is right to put into place a formal project management system that covers how the alliance will manage projects from start-up to close-out.

The Trade Hub, through Kanava, should assist by working closely with BA to develop a robust and appropriate project management system, which should be based on best practices from implementing USAID projects for a number of years. Once the systems are complete, the Hub should train staff on them.

4. Organizational Sustainability: Research best practices and lessons learned regarding sustainability of alliances abroad and organize workshop on sustainability

Assistance has been provided to BA on diversification of funding issues, including defining member benefits and developing potential fee for services. BA has subsequently conducted a survey of industry actors to get a better idea of what services they should be providing.

The Hub proposes a desk study to research how other regional and international organizations approach similar resource challenges. The study will document best practices and lessons learned for improving financial sustainability. The Hub will draw on the results of this research to help BA develop a comprehensive sustainability plan that takes into account the results of the alliance's survey and addresses the need to diversify its funding base and commercialize its current services.

The Trade Hub, through Kanava, should also organize a workshop to:

- Share best practices on sustainability, as gathered during the desktop study
- Define and develop member benefits as a way to ensure a steadier funding stream
- Discuss diversification of funding

The workshop would be offered in English for participants from BA and the African Cashew Alliance.

5. Organizational Sustainability: Conduct workshop with national committees to discuss mandates, roles and responsibilities, and services

The Hub has provided assistance mostly to Borderless Alliance's Executive Secretariat, but the alliance is now requesting capacity building assistance for its National Committees. Stronger and more active National Committees will:

- Increase the dialogue and work being done at the national level, leveraging the networks of local actors.
- Increase the dialogue to raise issues from the national level to the Executive Secretariat so that BA increases its relevance at the national level.
- Improve the ability of the Executive Secretariat to work with national governments to address issues of mutual interest.
- Strengthen Borderless Alliance's ability to effect change at the regional level.

The Trade Hub, through Kanava, should convene a workshop to work with the Executive Secretariat and National Committees to discuss the mandates of the National Committees, their role and responsibilities vis-à-vis the Executive Secretariat, and the services they can provide to their General Assemblies.

ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT

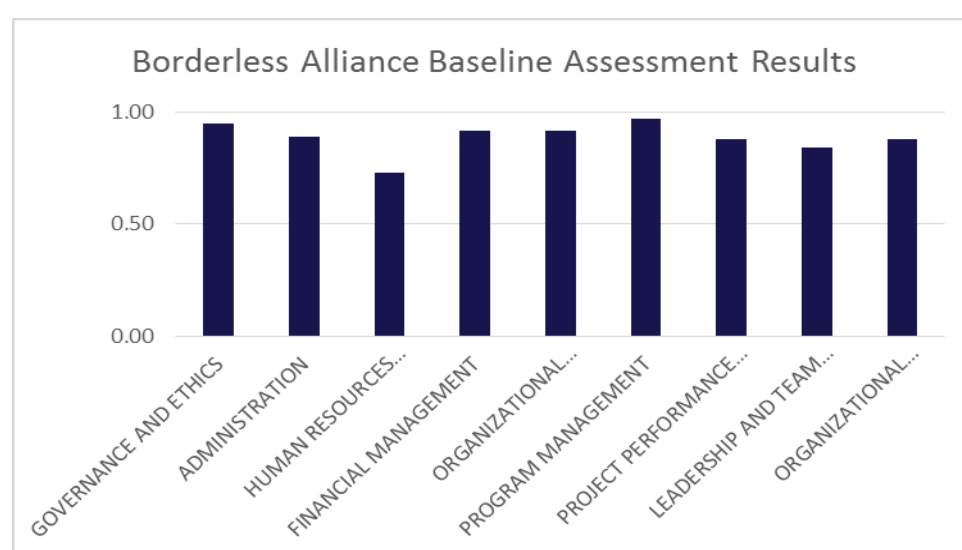
THE IMPACT STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT™ TOOL

Kanava International approaches organizations as partners with the goal of assisting them to strengthen their systems and train their personnel. By focusing on their management systems, these organizations will be better positioned to deliver their products and services, serve their members and clients, and increase their sales and revenues.

Kanava used its Impact Strengthening Development (ISD™) assessment tool to assess BA in nine areas: Governance & Ethics, Administration, Human Resources Management, Financial Management, Organizational Management, Program Management, Project Performance Management, Leadership & Team Dynamics, and Organizational Sustainability. The scoring under ISD™ is “No = 0”, “In Process = 0.5”, and “Yes = 1”. The ISD™ result for BA is then compared to a four-level ranking system to see how they score. The result can be used to compare the five organizations assessed (including BA) to see how they compare.

The ISD™ assessment is a management tool, not an audit of the organization’s systems. There are no right or wrong answers. ISD™ serves as a way to validate current practices and introduces new ideas that the organization may not have considered. It provokes discussion and contemplation of the way forward within the organization. Ultimately, the process leads to developing priorities to guide capacity building. The assessed organization should use it as a tool to strengthen its own capacity to be sustainable beyond its current reliance primarily on a single donor.

Figure 2: ISD™ Baseline Score Summary for Borderless Alliance



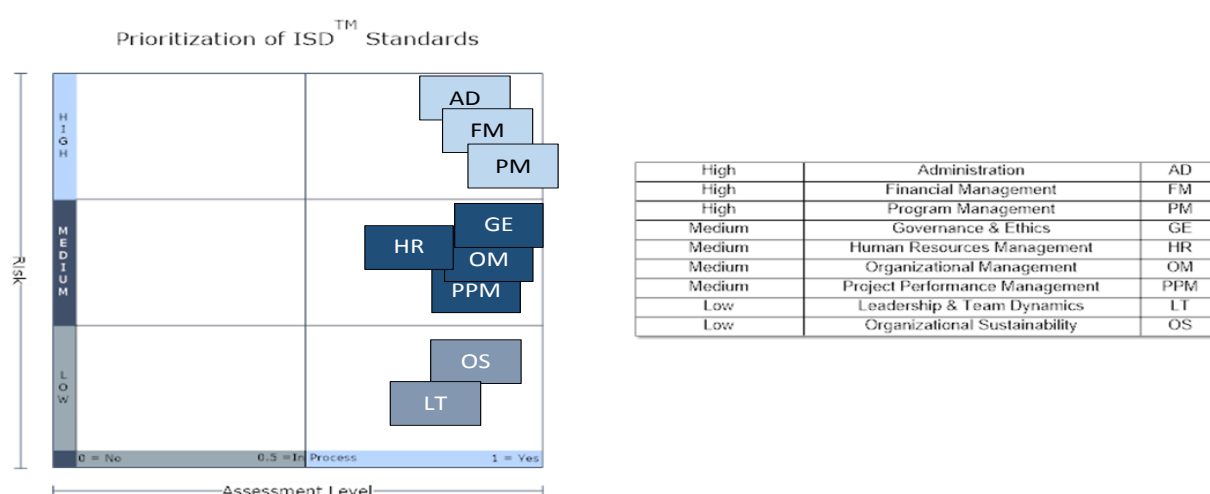
USING THE ISD™ TOOL AND SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS TO SET CAPACITY BUILDING PRIORITIES

The assessment tool can be used to look at an organization through the nine standards or through the detailed sub-sections that comprise a standard, thus enabling the organization to focus on specific sub-elements that need attention. The ISD™ tool includes a template for creating an action plan to address the areas that need to be strengthened, to make it easier for the organization to prioritize and track what it is currently working on, what has been completed, and what is still outstanding. The tool is also set up to let the organization assess itself in the future to see how it has progressed and what still needs to be done. The organization should assess itself annually.

After completing the assessment, we conducted a gap analysis to identify which sub-areas scored a “No = 0” (colored red) or an “In Process = 0.5” (colored yellow), to highlight the areas that need attention.

As the assessment includes many sub-areas, to assist the organization we have averaged the scores over the nine standards and prioritized them into three groupings (see Figure 3 below). This does not mean that BA has to agree with this prioritization, but it provides a framework to assist it in understanding the assessment results. While some of the actions are big tasks, a number of the sub-areas will not take much time or effort to address. Those can be done a bit at a time.

Figure 3: ISD™ Assessment Priority Areas: Borderless Alliance



ORGANIZATION'S ISD™ SCORE COMPARED TO TARGET SCORE BY ISD™ LEVEL

Below are the ISD™ scores for BA – its overall score is 0.89. In addition to BA's scores for the nine standards, it also shows the scores for the sub-areas within each standard. It is important for BA to implement activities to raise its capacity in the standards and sub-areas where it is currently scoring at lower ISD™ levels.

IMPACT STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT (ISD) TM ASSESSMENT TOOL			
	Org: Borderless Alliance (BA)		
			July 20-22, 2016
STANDARD			SCORE
OVERALL CALCULATED SCORE			0.89
1 GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS			0.95
	1.1.	Values / Mission / Vision / Goals	1.00
	1.2.	Organizational Structure	1.00
	1.3.	Board Composition and Responsibility	0.94
	1.4.	Legal Status	1.00
	1.5.	Succession Planning	0.50
2 ADMINISTRATION			0.89
	2.1.	Operational Policies, Procedures, and Systems	0.93
	2.2.	Travel Policies and Procedures	0.92
	2.3.	Procurement	0.72
	2.4.	Asset Management [Fixed Assets Control]	1.00
	2.5.	Information Technology (IT)	1.00
3 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT			0.73
	3.1.	Job Descriptions	1.00
	3.2.	Recruitment and Retention	0.77
	3.3.	Staffing Levels	0.75
	3.4.	Personnel Policies	1.00
	3.5.	Staff Time Management	0.88
	3.6.	Staff and Consultant Salaries and Benefits Policy	0.90
	3.7.	Staff Performance Management	0.15
	3.8.	Volunteers / Interns	0.00
4 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			0.92
	4.1.	Financial Planning	1.00
	4.2.	Financial Systems	0.90
	4.3.	Financial Controls	0.88
	4.4.	Banking Relationship and Accounts	1.00
	4.5.	Financial Management Personnel	1.00
	4.6.	Tracking Sources of Funding	1.00
5 ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT			0.92
	5.1.	Strategic Planning	1.00
	5.2.	Organizational Operational Plan	0.93
	5.3.	Change Management	0.63
	5.4.	Knowledge Management	1.00
	5.5.	Stakeholder Involvement	1.00
	5.6.	Public Communications [Marketing and Awareness Building]	0.88
6 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT			0.97
	6.1.	Client Compliance	0.92
	6.2.	Work Plan Development	1.00
	6.3.	Sub-grant / Subcontract Management	#DIV/0!
	6.4.	Technical Reporting	1.00
	6.5.	Community Involvement	1.00

7 PROJECT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT			0.88
7.1.	Project Management Capacity		0.71
7.2.	Project Implementation Status		1.00
7.3.	Field Oversight		0.88
7.4.	Standards for Delivery Service		1.00
7.5.	Supervision		0.50
7.6.	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)		1.00
7.7.	Quality Assurance		1.00
8 LEADERSHIP AND TEAM DYNAMICS			0.84
8.1.	Internal Communications		0.94
8.2.	Decision-making		0.63
8.3.	Work Environment		0.83
9 ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY			0.88
9.1.	New Opportunity / Business Development		0.80
9.2.	Diversification of Funding		0.88
9.3.	Cash Flow Management		1.00
9.4.	Absorptive Capacity		0.83

COMPARISON OF ISD™ AND OCA TOOLS

At the same time, because the assessments need to also address a Hub indicator, we needed to assess the seven areas covered by the OCA tool: Governance, Administration, Human Resources Management, Financial Management, Service Delivery, External Relations, and Sustainability. Twenty-eight of the OCA sub-areas mapped directly to the ISD™ sub-areas. Eleven more sub-areas were addressed separately.

Table 5: ISD™ Scores Translated to OCA Scores

ISD™ Scoring	OCA Scoring
N/A	0
0 – 0.15	1
0.16 – 0.30	2
0.31 – 0.50	3
0.51 – 0.70	4
0.71 – 0.90	5
0.91 – 1.0	6

While ISD™ and the OCA tool address similar areas of an organization's capacity, ISD™, while also participatory, uses an assessment tool to systematically and comprehensively look at an organization's systems, policies, and staff. Additionally, ISD™ looks at a broader range of issues and provides a granularity that does not come through with the OCA. To translate the ISD™ scoring to OCA scoring, we used the parameters shown in Table 5 for those areas that mapped.

For the 11 sub-areas that do not map to ISD™, we separately scored them using the OCA scoring methodology shown in Table 6.

Table 6: OCA Scores for Areas That Do Not Translate to ISD™

OCA Rating Scale	
0	Not applicable or sufficient information is not available to assess element
1	Needs urgent attention
2	Needs major improvement
3	Needs improvement on a wide scale

4	Needs improvement in limited aspects
5	Acceptable, room for some improvement
6	Acceptable, needs maintaining

As listed in Annex C, the consultant met with the BA Secretariat including the Executive Secretary, Advocacy Program Manager, Finance Manager, Communications Specialist, Admin & Logistics Officer, and ICT Specialist. We went through the questions and various staff members participated in the discussions, which were often lively. The participants found the assessment very comprehensive; it really got them thinking about their organization.

ANNEX B: FULL ASSESSMENT

Please find attached the full ISD™ assessment sheet, including OCA scores. Please note the following:

- On the tab, Assessment Tool Baseline Visit, there are columns to the far right that allow BA to set what the target ISD™ score they want to achieve for a particular row, and develop an action plan to achieve a higher target.
- There are other sheets included for future assessments (visits #2, #3, and #4), should BA want to assess itself again in the future.
- Any future assessments will automatically be recorded in the Summary of Progress tab, and a graph comparing the visits will be generated in the Graph tab.

Any questions about the ISD™ assessment tool can be sent to Carol Yee at cyee@kanavainternational.com

ANNEX C: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Person	Organization / Department	Title
Justin Bayili	Borderless Alliance	Executive Secretary
Afua Eshun	Borderless Alliance	Advocacy Program Manager
Awudu Hamidu	Borderless Alliance	Finance Manager
Venancious Tuor	Borderless Alliance	Communications Specialist
Aline Adamou	Borderless Alliance	Admin & Logistics Officer
Dela Bani	Borderless Alliance	Information and Communications Technology Specialist
Kossi Dahoui	Hub	Transport Specialist